Relaxation in Norms for Underground cable connecting Villlages in North-East Region

4476. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a restriction of 5 Km. radial distance for undergound cable for connecting villages covered by different Exchanges;

(b) if so, whether Government is aware that in the North-East and other hill areas, there is an urgent need for relaxing this norm due to sparse distribution of populations; and

(c) whether Government propose to relax this norm for these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

New Telephone Exchange in Tripura

4477. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for setting up of a new Telephone Exchange in Tripura;

(b) if so, how many such exchnages are proposed to be set up during the next year; and

(c) whether the entire Tripura will be covered under this plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exchange-wise commissioning programme for next year (1999-2000) is not finalised. However, Nine exchanges are proposed to be set up during 1998-99.

(c) Yes, Sir, the above 9 exchanges are proposed to be set up at different places of entire Tripura.

Reduction in Telecom Tariff

4478. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand from Andhra Pradesh Government to reduce the general telecom tariff in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Central Government;

(c) whether any efforts have been made to reduce the tariff in view of automation and other technical improvements; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce telecom tariff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) and (d) Tariff rationalisation is a continuous process and appropriate decision is taken based on all relevant considerations such as technology, cost parametres, traffic parametres, resources requirements, etc.

STD booths in some districts of Andhra Pradesh

4479. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand to increase the number of public STD booths in the districts of Cuddapah and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) the demand presently for this category of phones;

(c) what steps Government propose to make the STD booths more accessible;

(d) whether Government is giving them adequate facilities and help to function better; and

(e) if so, full details thereof?